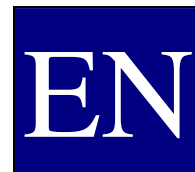




**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council conclusions on relations with the South Caucasus

*3023rd FOREIGN AFFAIRS Council meeting
Luxembourg, 14 June 2010*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council recalls its Conclusions of 8 December 2009 welcoming the expressed commitment of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to enhance their respective relations with the EU within the framework provided by the Eastern Partnership, as a specific Eastern dimension of the European Neighbourhood Policy.
2. The Council looks forward to the launch of negotiations for future Association Agreements in the course of July 2010, with a view to establish political association and achieve gradual economic integration of these countries with the EU, including the establishment of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas, once the countries have met the necessary conditions. The negotiating processes will be guided by the principles of inclusiveness, differentiation, conditionality and joint ownership. The Council underlines that active engagement of the partner countries and their commitment to shared values and principles, including democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and good governance are essential to make the negotiations and the implementation of these ambitious agreements a success. The EU is committed to assist the partner countries in this regard.
3. The Council notes that the recent decision on the establishment of the new subcommittees under the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements currently in force with the countries of the South Caucasus will considerably broaden the sectoral dialogue and contribute to advancing the implementation of the ENP Action Plans.

P R E S S

4. The Council recognises the high importance attached to mobility of citizens by the countries of the South Caucasus. Bearing in mind the importance of a secure environment, and in accordance with the Stockholm Programme and the Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit, the EU stands ready to promote mobility of citizens of the South Caucasus countries and other Eastern Partnership countries through visa facilitation and readmission agreements, and once these are successfully concluded and implemented, move towards a controlled process taking gradual steps towards visa-liberalisation as a long-term goal, on a case-by-case basis, as well as describe the conditions for well-managed and secure mobility. In this context, the Council has invited the Commission to develop before the end of 2010 a plan on how to take cooperation forward in this area.
 5. The Council recognises that conflicts hamper not only the political and economic development of the partner countries but also the regional cooperation and the stability of the European continent. In this context, the Council reiterates its commitment to support the processes aimed at peaceful and lasting settlement of conflicts in the region and calls on all parties to fully commit themselves to these processes.
 6. The EU will continue to promote stability, prosperity and cooperation, throughout the South Caucasus, building also on the opportunities provided by the multilateral framework of the Eastern Partnership, and reaffirms its commitment to assist Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to this end.."
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